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March 3, 2006

To: House Transportation Committee Members

From: Tonia Ritter, Legislative Counsel

Re: Senate Bill 779

Senate Bill 779, sponsored by Senator Jud Gilbert has been scheduled for the House Transportation Committee on Tuesday, March 7. The legislation will ensure the continued use of a provision that was put in place on an experimental basis in 2002. Michigan Farm Bureau has worked with Senator Gilbert to craft this legislation and would appreciate your support of the bill.

This legislation is important for agriculture as it ensures that specifically configured vehicles may transport agricultural commodities for pick-up or delivery on all highways of the state. Specifically the statute currently provides that a 5 axle, tandem-tandem with at least a 36 inch spread between tandems can weigh 17,000 pounds per axle, not to exceed a gross weight of 80,000 pounds. It is important to note the exception does not apply during frost restrictions.

Throughout the course of the past few years we have not heard of significant issues that have transpired as a result of this very specific exception. It appears to be working. The continued availability of the exception is important to production agriculture, as farms, nurseries, etc. are in most instances not located within the statutory distance from the state or federal highway system to use standard bridge exemptions.

Again, Michigan Farm Bureau would urge your support of S.B. 779, and we would be happy to answer any questions that you may have regarding the bill. You can contact me at 517-819-5662 or Matt Smego at 517-230-1511.